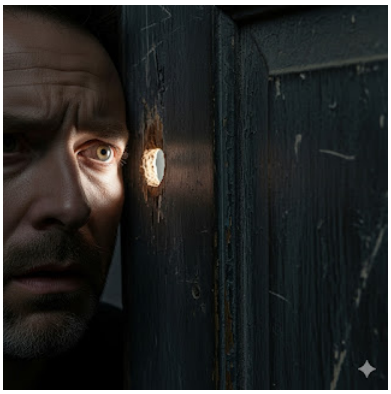
UCLA Faculty Association

News and opinion from Dan Mitchell since 2009

Friday, September 5, 2025

What we would likely hear behind those closed doors



We don't know what kind legal advice the Regents are getting behind closed doors with regard to the current UCLA/UC conflict with the feds over frozen research grants. But it is likely along the lines of the item below:

From the Chronicle of Higher Education: *The Supreme Court has created a major hurdle for colleges seeking to preserve research grants that have been canceled by the Trump administration, including Harvard University. In an emergency decision..., a 5-4 majority of the justices allowed the government to go forward with canceling some 900 National Institutes of Health grants worth nearly $800 million... The Supreme Court's brief order stated that cases challenging the loss of those research dollars must be brought in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, a special division of the judicial branch created to hear monetary claims against the government for things like breach of contract. In that venue, researchers or other entities might have to file complaints individually for every canceled grant...*

A different 5-4 majority of the justices upheld the same district court's authority to invalidate the government's reasoning and guidance for canceling those grants. The Trump administration has justified the terminations by saying that research projects related to race, gender identity, and other diversity issues don't align with the president's priorities. In his June decision, Judge William G. Young ruled that the government had shown "pervasive racial discrimination in selecting grants for termination" and "an unmistakable pattern of discrimination against women's health issues."

The split decision from the Supreme Court has cast uncertainty over higher education's efforts to defend itself from the administration's leverage of using research grants to force changes in admissions, hiring, and student discipline, among other things... Harvard officials sued the Trump administration in April after the university rejected a lengthy set of demands to eliminate diversity, equity, and inclusion programs, remove race as a factor in admissions and hiring, and cooperate with orders from the Department of Homeland Security. The administration then announced that it was canceling more than $2 billion in federal grants and contracts.

In July, Judge Allison D. Burroughs of the U.S. District Court of Massachusetts heard arguments in that case, with both Harvard and the government seeking a summary judgment that would avoid a trial... Even if Judge Burroughs rules in Harvard's favor, there is a good chance that the case will end up in front of the Supreme Court, where most of the justices have been pretty clear about how they think grant-termination issues should be handled, said Thomas Bluestein, associate vice president in the Office of Access, Compliance, and Community at George Mason University...*

Full story at https://www.chronicle.com/article/will-the-supreme-courts-ruling-on-research-grants-sink-harvards-lawsuit-against-trump.

===

*As blog readers will know, she did rule for Harvard.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: diversity, George Mason U, Harvard, politics, UC, UC Regents, UCLA

Straws in the Wind - Part 92

From Inside Higher Ed: *Less than a month before the start of the semester, Ph.D. students at Columbia University in New York were told with little explanation that they would no longer be teaching this fall. The catalyst for this change is unclear. The university said it's an effort to reduce the teaching load on Columbia graduate students and allow them to finish their degrees in six years rather than seven. The students said it's a move to weaken the labor power of their union, which is in the middle of tense negotiations with the university to renew its contract,*

The Council of UC Faculty Associations

- Faculty are fighting back
- Faculty Lawsuit Demands Public Access to Trump Administration's Settlement Demands on University of California
- Coalition of UC unions condemns Trump's attacks on the UC and the California economy
- Stand up for values in the face of Trump's $300 million cut to UCLA scholars
- Faculty leaders comment on UCB Chancellor Lyon's appearance before House Committee on Education and the Workforce

Remaking the University

- Liner Note 39. Attack Theory for Education - 9/28/2025
- Liner Note 38. The University of California's Charlie Kirk Tribute Act - 9/16/2025
- Why Should We "Stand Up for the UC?" (Guest Post) - 9/1/2025

Higher Ed. News & Commentary

- Chronicle of Higher Education
- Inside Higher Education
- Remaking the University
- Changing Universities
- California Professor

Search This Blog

Search

UC Faculty Associations

- UCLA Faculty Association
- UCSB Faculty Association
- UCSC Faculty Association
- UCB Faculty Association
- Council of UC Faculty Associations

Other Faculty Organizations

- American Association of University Professors
- California Faculty Association (NEA)
- UC-AFT

Topics

politics (2187) UC (2046) UC Regents (1853) health care (1409) State Budget (1259) governor (1105) UC budget crisis (954) UC-Berkeley (890) diversity (879) pension (655) pensions (589) admissions (528) tuition (523) athletics (505) CSU (401) transportation (385) UC-Davis (373) online education (338) UCOP (304) uc retirement

which expired June 30. The students, who are members of the graduate student union Student Workers of Columbia, will still be paid. However, instead of receiving a biweekly teaching stipend, they'll get a lump sum at the start of the semester.

To pay both the Ph.D.s and their replacements, "the cost to the university likely runs to millions of dollars," estimated Michael Thaddeus, a mathematics professor at Columbia and vice president and acting president of the Columbia chapter of the American Association of University Professors...

To fill the now-vacant teaching jobs, Columbia is recruiting for one-year lectureships and advertising the roles to adjuncts, postdocs and New York–based graduate students at other universities...

Full story at https://www.insidehighered.com/news/students/graduate-students-and-postdocs/2025/08/27/columbia-ends-some-teaching-roles-grad.

Note: Private-sector grad student unions - as at Columbia - would likely lose their legal protection were they to file unfair labor practice charges at the current NLRB. In the case of UC, which as a public institution is not under the NLRB and is regulated by the California PERB, this issue does not arise directly. On the other hand, higher ed is a field in which everybody looks at everybody. So if Columbia and other private institutions take aggressive stances, UC administrators will be watching the results.

==

From Lookout Eugene-Springfield: *Faculty frustrations with potential layoffs and program cuts at the University of Oregon came to the surface on Friday, Aug. 29, during a testy question-and-answer session with two top university officials. The University Senate's executive committee held an emergency virtual meeting at noon and invited UO President Karl Scholz and Provost Chris Long to answer questions from faculty members on rumored terminations coming the week of Sept. 7. The meeting, which peaked at 200 participants, came hours after faculty members protested against the potential cuts in a campus rally organized by the faculty union, United Academics of the University of Oregon. The union claims that UO will terminate 25 tenured and tenure-track faculty next month, on top of the 42 employees who got layoff notices in June.*

Scholz and Long opened the meeting with back-to-back statements, then answered questions from faculty members. Throughout the session, some attendees directly responded to the officials' remarks with sharply critical messages in the meeting's chat feature and with emoji reactions. In his statement, the president reiterated the university's reasoning for the cuts: insufficient state funding, "overly generous" pension payments and expensive health benefit costs, labor contracts, and competition among universities to grow student enrollment. All of those factors converged to create a $25 million to $30 million projected budget gap when enrollment numbers came in lower than forecasted on May 1, Scholz said... He said the university is making "very extensive" administrative cuts, but didn't provide further details. Scholz said at a town hall in June that he didn't want to cut administrators' pay due to the competitive job market in higher education.

The faculty union has argued that budget cuts disproportionately affect faculty and staff...

Full story at https://lookouteugene-springfield.com/story/university-of-oregon/2025/08/29/faculty-press-uo-leaders-protest-over-looming-layoffs/.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:20 AM No comments:

Labels: Columbia, strikes, u of Oregon, UC

(New) Union News

From the Bruin: *Research and public service professionals across the UC voted Tuesday to form a new union that will represent 7,200 workers. The union, Research and Public Service Professionals-United Auto Workers, will represent workers who run "core facilities," administer grants and analyze data, among other services. About half of those who the union will represent voted in the election, with 83% voting "yes" for the union's formation. RPSPs have cited multiple reasons for the formation of RPSP-UAW, including stagnant salaries amid increasing workloads and a lack of administrative transparency.*

"In the face of federal funding cuts to higher education, many RPSPs also want a union to gain a stronger political voice," a RPSP-UAW press release said...

Full story at https://dailybruin.com/2025/09/02/research-and-public-service-professionals-vote-to-form-new-uc-union.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:10 AM No comments:

Labels: UC

(299) ucrp (298) audio (291) traffic (290) new hotel-conference center (282) UC enrollment (279) enrollment (255) UC-San Diego (252) community colleges (236) LAO (223) UC-Irvine (182) fund raising (165) UC-San Francisco (157) UC-Santa Barbara (156) UC-Santa Cruz (155) controller (146) faculty center (142) UC-Riverside (139) ballot propositions (132) CalPERS (121) UC-Merced (112) faculty pay (109) Master Plan (102) Yudof (90) UCRS retirement (62) Faculty Association at UCLA (60) parking (60) privatization (59) CalSTRS (50) UC Berkeley (34) copyright (32) campus climate survey (28) UCRS (21) Michigan Model (18) UC Merced (17) uc funding (16) Regents (14) State Contribution (14) UCOF (14) faculty recruitment (12) UC pay (7) graduate education (6) UC San Diego (5) UC Irvine (3) UCpolitics (3) teaching evaluation (3) UC Santa Cruz (2)

Blog Archive

▼ 2025 (837)
▼ October (3)
Watch the Regents Afternoon Meeting of Sept. 17, 2025
Straws in the Wind - Part 117
Subway Webinar
► September (116)
► August (115)
► July (101)
► June (96)
► May (85)
► April (81)
► March (83)
► February (76)
► January (81)
► 2024 (832)
► 2023 (828)
► 2022 (719)
► 2021 (710)
► 2020 (914)
► 2019 (671)
► 2018 (595)
► 2017 (666)
► 2016 (715)
► 2015 (765)
► 2014 (704)
► 2013 (776)
► 2012 (839)
► 2011 (738)
► 2010 (431)
► 2009 (12)

Contributors

- California Policy Issues
- Toby Higbie
- UCLA Faculty Association

Another bad traffic weekend coming up

From Patch:

The following ramps will be closed on the northbound side:

- Santa Monica Boulevard on-ramp
- Wilshire Boulevard off-ramp
- Sepulveda Boulevard and Moraga Drive off-ramp
- Sunset Boulevard on- and off-ramps
- eastbound and westbound Wilshire Boulevard on-ramps

And the following southbound ramps will be closed:

- Sunset Boulevard/Church Lane on- and off-ramps
- westbound Wilshire Boulevard on-ramp

Alternate Routes

During the weekend-long closure last month, motorists reported painful gridlock on both the freeway and nearby surface streets.

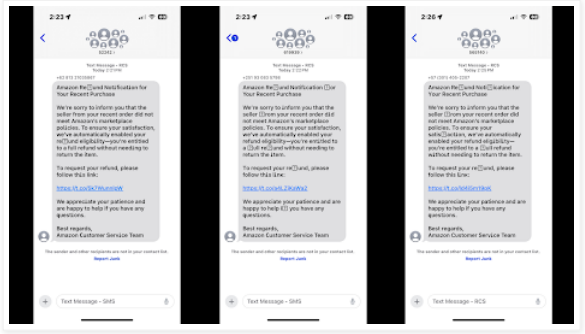
Full story at https://patch.com/california/santamonica/s/jlfli/gridlock-alert-major-closures-set-to-jam-up-the-westside-again-this-weekend.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:05 AM No comments:

Labels: traffic, UCLA

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Lucky Me - Part 3



Here are three refunds from Amazon for things I didn't buy! All I have to do is click on them! (And two more arrived after these!) Lucky me! But I will be very unlucky if I actually do click.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 5:33 PM No comments:

Labels: email fraud

Will Harvard Continue to Lead the Charge? - Part 55

From the NY Times: *Harvard University won a crucial legal victory in its clash with the Trump administration on Wednesday, when a federal judge said that the government had broken the law by freezing billions of dollars in research funds in the name of stamping out antisemitism. The ruling may not be the final word on the matter, but the decision by Judge Allison D.*

Burroughs of the U.S. District Court in Boston was an interim rebuff of the Trump administration's campaign to remake elite higher education by force...

Although the ruling was a milestone for Harvard, the only university to sue over the administration's targeted assault on its research funding, President Trump had vowed to appeal any decision that went against him. His administration has spent months seeking to pressure Harvard in ways beyond research money, and while Judge Burroughs's ruling may not put an end to that campaign, her opinion was a bracing rebuke...

The White House condemned the ruling. "To any fair-minded observer, it is clear that Harvard University failed to protect their students from harassment and allowed discrimination to plague their campus for years," said Liz Huston, a White House spokeswoman. "Harvard does not have a constitutional right to taxpayer dollars and remains ineligible for grants in the future." She added that the government would "appeal this egregious decision, and we are confident we will ultimately prevail in our efforts to hold Harvard accountable." ...*

The administration... hoped that Judge Burroughs would not issue much of a ruling at all. Its lawyers argued that an 1887 law meant that the suit, which the Justice Department depicted as a contractual matter, needed to be heard by a specialized court in Washington. More recently, it urged the judge to consider the implications of an August decision by the Supreme Court in a different case. In that case, which also concerned federal grants, the court ruled that challenges to individual terminations should be brought in the Court of Federal Claims. But it was a muddled ruling that left the door open for policy challenges in federal district courts. Judge Burroughs acknowledged the Supreme Court's decision on Wednesday and said she was "endeavoring" to follow it, but she largely asserted her own court's jurisdiction...

Full story at https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/03/us/harvard-trump-funding-ruling.html.

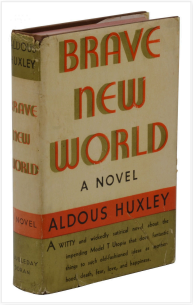
===

*It might be noted that Judge Burroughs was the judge who initially ruled for Harvard in its defense of affirmative action in admissions that the US Supreme Court later reversed.

Posted by California Policy Issues at 7:12 AM No comments:

Labels: admissions, diversity, Harvard, politics

Brave New World



From Phys.org: *A new Simon Fraser University course this fall marks a world first: a university professor teaching alongside a live, fully expressive 3D artificial intelligence collaborator on stage. This pioneering course introduces a new model for human-AI interaction in an academic setting, positioning SFU at the forefront of educational innovation.*

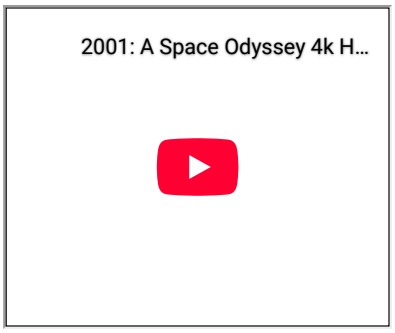
Developed at the School of Interactive Arts and Technology's iViz research lab headed by professor Steve DiPaola, the AI named Kia is a high-end, expressive digital persona. With real-time facial expressions, lip-sync, and a multitude of emotive body languages, Kia is designed to be a dynamic and intellectual sparring partner for DiPaola for a course exploring the principles, potential, and ethics of AI technologies...

Full story at https://phys.org/news/2025-08-professor-debuts-ai-sidekick-trailblazing.html.

For more information, watch:

Or direct to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTfYIZ5DhmU.

For more trepidation, watch:



Or direct to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqCCubrky00.

Or you can read:

Dwan Ev ceremoniously soldered the final connection with gold. The eyes of a dozen television cameras watched him and the subether bore throughout the universe a dozen pictures of what he was doing.

He straightened and nodded to Dwar Reyn, then moved to a position beside the switch that would complete the contact when he threw it. The switch that would connect, all at once, all of the monster computing machines of all the populated planets in the universe -- ninety-six billion planets -- into the supercircuit that would connect them all into one supercalculator, one cybernetics machine that would combine all the knowledge of all the galaxies.

Dwar Reyn spoke briefly to the watching and listening trillions. Then after a moment's silence he said, "Now, Dwar Ev."

Dwar Ev threw the switch. There was a mighty hum, the surge of power from ninety-six billion planets. Lights flashed and quieted along the miles-long panel.

Dwar Ev stepped back and drew a deep breath. "The honor of asking the first question is yours, Dwar Reyn."

"Thank you," said Dwar Reyn. "It shall be a question which no single cybernetics machine has been able to answer."

He turned to face the machine. "Is there a God?"

The mighty voice answered without hesitation, without the clicking of a single relay.

"Yes, *now* there is a God."

Sudden fear flashed on the face of Dwar Ev. He leaped to grab the switch.

A bolt of lightning from the cloudless sky struck him down and fused the switch shut.

(*Fredric Brown, "Answer" 1954*)

Posted by California Policy Issues at 3:30 AM No comments:

Labels: Simon Fraser U

Newer Posts Home Older Posts

Subscribe to: Posts (Atom)

Simple theme. Powered by Blogger.